

FISCAL 2004-2005 BUDGET HEARING MINUTES
Lancaster County Board of Commissioners
Tuesday, August 10, 2004
County Commissioners Hearing Room, Room 112
First Floor, County-City Building
7 P.M.

Commissioners Present: Ray Stevens, Chair
Larry Hudkins, Vice Chair
Bernie Heier
Deb Schorr
Bob Workman

Others Present: Dave Kroeker, Budget and Fiscal Officer
Susan Starcher, County Clerk's Office

The Lancaster County Board of Commissioners' public hearing on the Lancaster County Fiscal 2004-2005 budget was convened at 7:00 p.m..

Ray Stevens, Chair of the Lancaster County Board of Commissioners, opened the Fiscal Year 2004-2005 budget hearing and gave a brief opening statement regarding the overall budget indicating that it has been a difficult budget year for the County in lieu of state reductions, loss of federal grant funding for juvenile and adult drug courts and employee health insurance costs. Stevens invited those who wished to testify to come forward.

Lincoln City Libraries

Carol Conner, Lincoln City Libraries Director, appeared and stated their request for funding is \$609,680 and will support library services to all Lancaster County residents including access to Bennet Martin Public Library, access to all branch libraries, home outreach by mail, summer reading programs, bi-weekly bookmobile service to eleven County sites and remote access to the library catalog and database.

Paul Edwards, representing the Lincoln Independent Business Association (LIBA), appeared and thanked the County Board for making themselves available to discuss budget issues. He stated an area they would like to work with the County Board on is health insurance policies for County employees. He suggested that the County work with the City of Lincoln and LIBA to develop a health insurance consortium/advisory group to review ways to save on employee health insurance costs. Hudkins asked how many hours the general employee works in the business community to obtain full-time benefits. Edwards responded that he would poll their small business owners regarding their policy and respond back to the County Board.

Mike Donlan, 9270 Pioneer Court, Lincoln, Nebraska, appeared to speak in opposition to the termination of funding to agencies who provide support services to residents with mental and developmental disabilities. He questioned why the funds were being cut while other cost saving measures are not being implemented.

Franklin Manning, 7730 Aylesworth Avenue, Lincoln, Nebraska, appeared to speak in support of the Lancaster Events Center stating youth learn about leadership, develop hands on skills and learn about cooperation through 4-H. He added that the County fair should continue to be supported.

Teri Roberts, Executive Director of the ARC of Lincoln/Lancaster County, appeared to express concern regarding the termination of funding support services to the developmentally disabled. She stated she was appearing on behalf of the ARC, Down Syndrome Association, YWCA, Mosaic, Hispanic Center, Wellness Initiatives of Nebraska, Active Community Treatments, Loveda Mitchell and Developmental Services Nebraska and submitted her written comments into the record (Exhibit A).

Mary O'Hare, with Wellness Initiatives of Nebraska, appeared to express her concerns regarding termination of agreements for the developmentally disabled and the impact it could have relating to grant writing and enrichment programs offered.

Doug Malone, Roca, Nebraska, appeared in support of the Lancaster Events Center and the County fair. He added that there should be a cooperative effort to work with youth and families living within the City limits, as well as other groups, in an effort to get more people involved.

Craig Madsen, 7031 Cedar Creek Circle, Lincoln, Nebraska, appeared and requested the County Board to reconsider their decision to discontinue funding for the developmentally disabled. He suggested the Board slowly reduce funding over a period of time or delay the discontinuation for a time to allow agencies to seek other funding sources.

Chad Madsen, 7031 Cedar Creek Circle, Lincoln, Nebraska, appeared and stated he works part-time at ServiceLinc and also volunteers at Bennet Martin Public Library. He stressed how important ServiceLinc and other agencies are to himself as well as all other clients they serve. Madsen said everyone deserves to work if they choose, including the disabled population.

Bill Zabel, Co-Director of ServiceLinc, appeared and submitted his comments in writing (Exhibit B) and urged the Board to reconsider their discontinuation of funding to developmentally disabled.

Mike Browne, 6450 Campbell Drive, Lincoln, Nebraska, indicated he has two sons who are developmentally disabled and expressed his concern about the termination of funding support services to that population.

Dave Merrill, with Region V Services, appeared in opposition to the termination of funding and indicated Lancaster County would be the first of 93 counties to cut funding to the developmentally disabled. He urged the County Board to review agencies with budget increases in an effort to find other areas to cut. In response to a question asked by Heier regarding cash reserves, Merrill responded that there are none. Hudkins asked what percentage of the funds go to clients. Merrill responded that it is approximately one-half of one percent.

Terry Dittmer, 11011 West Martell Road, Crete, Nebraska, appeared and stated he has a child in the Region V System and that he is opposed to the termination of funding for the developmentally disabled.

Stevens asked if anyone else wished to testify.

No one appeared and the hearing was closed.

Workman asked if it was possible to adopt the proposed budget on August 17, 2004 instead of August 24th.

Discussion followed regarding Workman's request.

MOTION: Workman moved and Hudkins seconded to place the adoption of Lancaster County's Proposed Budget for Fiscal Year 2004-2005 on the Board of Commissioners agenda for Tuesday, August 17, 2004. Hudkins, Heier, Schorr and Workman voted aye. Stevens voted no. Motion carried.

MOTION: Heier moved and Schorr seconded adjournment of the Board of Commissioners meeting at 8:41 p.m.. Heier, Hudkins, Schorr, Workman and Stevens voted aye. Motion carried.

Bruce Medcalf
County Clerk